

Gifford—Tongan Society

189

On the morning of the sixth day the boys went out and bathed in the ocean. This bath was called *kaukautapu*. Each boy took off his own bandages and bathed without anyone's aid. When they returned to the shore the operator and two assistants met them and redressed and bandaged the boys in the same fashion as formerly. This bandage is said to have had no name other than *lalava*, or *haikai*. 881
515
752

There followed a big feast, although the operator was furnished free food throughout the period. All the women ate by themselves; the men ate with the boys. The tapu was lifted and this fact was announced to each boy by his father or male guardian. A present of oven products (food), mats, tapa, and other materials was assembled by the fathers of the boys and presented to the operator. Other ovens were opened for the general feast in honor of the boys. No present was given them. Even if a boy died from the operation, as sometimes occurred, the father of this boy contributed his share to the present for the operator. The boy was always believed to have died because he broke some one of the tapus. After this feast, the tapus were resumed for four more days and nights. Bandages, like the first, were worn for two weeks after this feast. The tapus are said to have had no names. 881
574
264
784
593
432
761
784
752

MARRIAGE

Collocott (12) has published a brief account of marriage in Tonga, but it seems worth while to present my data here, as they are fuller in some particulars. 58
114

Marriages are classified as *feofaaki* (for love), *aleai* (arranged) and *fa-tongia* (duty), this last term applying only to cross-cousin marriages. To marry two wives at one and the same time is called *hamawa*. 581
595

Wilson (66, p. liv) states:

Polygamy is established, but adultery is punished with death.

The lascivious practices which are almost universal there [Georgian Islands] seem to be usually restricted here to common prostitutes of the lowest class. 837
639
548
171
837

The Tongan term for prostitute is *muilau*. It is perhaps to such a person that the term *finelangatotoa* (a woman who steals home from her paramour's house before the break of day) would be also applied.

The principal relative concerned with marriage plans of young people is the father's sister. She may often take upon herself the ordering of the marriage arrangements of her brother's children and may veto their plans of marriage and impose her own. A girl destined to become the wife of a chief wears two long tresses, one on each side of her head. 584
604
584
522
302

As mentioned by Collocott (12, p. 222) an oven of food (*veifua*) is presented to the bride by her brother. 585
543
431

The sororate (*tongipou*), following the death of the wife, was practiced in Tonga but the levirate was said to be infrequent. Cross-cousin marriage of a man to his mother's brother's daughters was common among chiefs, but rare among commoners. A girl who becomes the bride of her cross cousin is denoted by the term *kititama*. Marriage to identical cousins was regarded as improper. The only such marriage recorded was on Ata Island where were also a considerable number of cross-cousin marriages. 587
582
621
565

837 rank, they might at least expect a severe beat-
 [684] ing, and the offender himself come off as badly,
 [565] if not worse: but, independent of these restric-
 [589] tions, &c. Mr. Mariner is of opinion that the
 women are disposed to be faithful to their hus-
 bands, as being in their own acknowledgment
 their superiors, guardians, and protectors; and
 most of them, he firmly believes, are much at-
 tached to them, as he judges from their con-
 duct when they become widows: witness the
 behaviour of Toobo Nuha's widows, and those
 589 of the late king. Mafi Habe, Mr. Mariner's
 836 adopted mother, did not, after the king died,
 837 marry another, or admit a lover; although
 587 Voogi, who was considered the handsomest, and
 one of the most agreeable men in all the Tonga
 islands, became passionately in love with her,
 and would have paid his addresses with the
 greatest fervour and perseverance, if she had
 allowed him opportunities: at this time she was
 at the Hapai islands, residing with her father,
 under whose protection she remained at the
 time Mr. Mariner left the islands, which was
 about eight months after her husband's death;
 though she might have married again, without
 any impropriety, two months afterwards, or al-
 837 lowed of an amour without any reproach. With
 565 respect to the wives of the lower ranks in so-
 ciety, they are oftener to be met with alone,

OF THE TONGA PEOPLE.

163

and on such occasions sometimes consent to the solicitations of chiefs whom they may happen to meet, not, as Mr. Mariner thinks, from an abandoned principle, or want of affection to their husbands, but from a fear of incurring the resentment of their superiors: the wives even of the lowest orders, he thinks, are very faithfully attached to their husbands. 837 565

From the above investigation, we think it would be but giving a fair opinion of the reputation of the married women to say, that they are not only circumspect in conduct, but chaste in principle; and when we consider that the married women form about two thirds of the female population, (that are marriageable,) it will give us no mean opinion of their moral reputation. 837

When a man divorces his wife, which is attended with no other ceremony than just telling her that she may go, she becomes perfect mistress of her own conduct, and may marry again, which is often done a few days afterwards, without the least disparagement to her character: or if she choose she may remain single and admit a lover occasionally, or may cohabit with her lover for a time, and remain at his house without being considered his wife, having no particular charge of his domestic concerns, and may leave him when she pleases, and this she 586 587 836 837

586 may also do without the least reproach or the
 587 least secrecy. From this circumstance we may
 836 draw an argument in favour of the chastity of
 837 the women generally, for if they were of a different
 581 character it is natural to suppose that
 [831] very few would marry, except those who, when
 very young, were betrothed to chiefs, and consequently
 married independently of their consent: but we find that three times that number
 are actually married: and as many are married
 three, four, or five times, it cannot be from an
 unchaste, libertine, or wandering disposition on
 the part of the women, seeing that when once
 divorced they may remain single if they please,
 and enjoy all the liberty that the most libertine
 heart can desire. If now it be asked, "Why
 then do they marry?" The answer is, for love of
 one object, with the idea that the object of their
 affections will *always* make them happy; and if
 they are disappointed in one instance they are
 willing to try it in a second, a third, &c.: in
 short, it would appear that the force of sentimental
 affection blinds them to the probability of a
 disappointment, and they willingly make a
 generous sacrifice of their liberty to prove the
 strength of their attachment*.

836 As to those women who are not actually married

832 * The position, that every woman is at heart a rake, does
 not appear to hold true in the Tonga islands.

584 not interested in letting her marry the first man who chances
178 to come along. The marriage itself, therefore, is decided
upon, not by the young people, but by the older men of the
two households. The two young people are sufficiently
concerned with older Tongan ways not to cut an apparent
knot by elopement and thus to anger their elders.

MARRIAGE

583 From our household-census it is possible to present a
585 rough statistical picture of the marital status of all the
[588] adults in the village. There are thirty-nine couples living
together as man and wife. Of this number, thirty-five
couples are married. The marriage ceremonies of these
thirty-five couples are of two types. Civil- and church-
registrations account for nineteen couples, civil- and church-
registrations plus old-time Tongan-style celebrations of the
marriage, account for the remaining sixteen couples. Of
these thirty-five marriages, twenty-three are between mates
whose only marriage is the present one. Twelve marriages
are between persons of whom one or both have been
previously married. Types of marriage in this category and
the number of each are: Single man with divorcée, two;
divorcé with single woman, five; widower with single
woman, three; widower with widow, two. Of these twelve
marriages, therefore, ten are those in which a previously
unmarried person mated with someone previously mated.
[586] It is thus clear that a previous marriage terminated by death
[587] or divorce is no bar to remarriage with a previously unmated
person.

586 The cost of a divorce in Tonga is ten pounds per mate,
[435] or twenty pounds per divorce. This sum represents the
amount that it would take an average householder almost
two years to earn by cutting copra on his plantation. It is
586 only to be expected therefore, that many unhappy Tongan
588 marriages end not by divorce but by an informal separation
which allows the mates to set up unblessed unions with others
in like circumstances. If these unions become permanent,
588 the mates are tacitly assumed by the villagers to be as-if
married, the children as-if legitimate. The village attitude
is more one of pity for misfortune than anything else. There
is never any comment, scandal, or gossip about such unions.

PANGAI. A VILLAGE IN TONGA

131

CHURCH SUPPORT

794

The Protestant villager supports his church by attending church at least seven times each week, by sending his children to Sunday school, by paying quarterly dues of 2/- per member, by building and repairing his church, by paying his pastor a small stipend (in Pangai, five or six pounds per year), by providing a plantation-garden for the pastor, by providing the kerosene for the lamps of evening service. Children graduate from Sunday school to full church-membership at about the age of sixteen-years.

793

794

In return the pastor is on hand to bless every necessary occasion with Divine help and support. He also provides powerful moral and spiritual exhortations for each church service. An easy-going pastor will get on well with his church members. Pastors with unbending principles, on the other hand, will often come into conflict with the villagers, especially when he urges them to put principles into practice. The Protestant villager is unbending in his principles, more easy about practice. He will often criticize mildly those whose actions suggest a slipping of morality. But he feels that it is the job of the police to do more than this; and if the police do not do more, then he is content to let well alone.

794

589

[586]

[587]

As a sidelight on both religion and morality in the village, it may be noted that should a local lay-preacher (deacon) lose his wife by death, he generally resigns his preaching commission as long as he remains a widower, applying to have his name again entered on the rolls when he remarries. The apparent assumption by all concerned is that one should not be asked to trust a lay-preacher, by definition one who is both highly religious and highly moral, to remain a pure-souled, good, unselfish Christian while unmarried. Wise in the ways of men, the Wesleyan Church prefers to put no Tongan to such a test.

794

According to the pastor of the Neiafu Free Wesleyan Church, the village of Pangai itself is considered in church circles to be a pretty poor village both economically and spiritually. This is inferred from the fact that there is a long-standing debt of some twenty-odd pounds on the church-house. No amount of prodding seems to make it possible

KINSHIP AND BEHAVIOUR IN A TONGAN VILLAGE

554 differentiated from every other brother does not exist in fact in the village.
621 But such rank is limited to the relative rank, strictly speaking, between
586 two persons concerned, and is not the absolute rank of the triangle of
587 hierarchy.

In my opinion, it looks both theoretically and practically impossible
to integrate all the people of the community into the ramified structure
for the following reasons:

554 (a) Generally, the union of a man and woman is not stable. It is
621 not unusual for a man to have children by several women and for a
586 woman to have children by several men. Consequently, an individual
587 may have a number of half siblings who share the same mother and at
593 the same time who share the same father. It must be difficult to integrate
all the siblings of the community as a whole in one alignment from the
highest to the lowest in accordance with the order of their birth.

554 (b) An individual often has a double relationship to another in-
621 dividual. For example, if 28 traces through his mother, the mother of
602 24 and 16 is his sister, but if 28 traces through his father, she is his father's
sister's son's daughter (see Fig. 3). In this case he may probably behave
towards her according to the direct relationship as brother and sister. But
what is the criterion to integrate all the villagers in one hierarchy for they
may have a double or triple relationship with one another?

554 (c) The sister is superior to the brother and her children to his
621 children. Consequently, a man (A) who marries a woman rises auto-
593 matically into a higher position than her brother (B). On the other
607 hand A can not hold up his head before a man (C) who marries A's
sister. Then in the relationship among these three men, C, is in the
highest rank while B is in the lowest. But it may well be that B is the
elder brother of C, or B's mother is C's father's sister. For these reasons
it is difficult to stratify all the descendants of one person into a single
ramified system.

554 Anyway, there are three principles in regard to ranking; the elder
593 brother is higher than the younger brother; the sister is higher than the
brother; and the husband is higher than the wife. These principles
may sometimes offset each other. So each individual has a double rank;
this one is higher than that, but this may be lower than that. Even if
a person is the direct descendant in the senior line of a common ancestor,
his rank is not always paramount. At the same time a descendant from
622 a remote collateral is not necessarily the lowest. Leka occupies, in fact,
621 the supreme position in the community. This seems to be so because he is
554 *eiki* (chief) and *matapule* of the Queen, not because he belongs to the
428 senior line of the kinship; he is the second son of his father Tevita Leka;
848 whose first son may be an illegitimate son, and this first son's daughter's
sons are 16 and 24.

554 As described in the latter half of this paper, the relative rank of
593 individuals is quite important in Tongan family. The behaviours of kin
602 are precisely defined, and expressed overtly on the ceremonial occasions.
585 In *kava* drinking at weddings, the first and the second cups were taken by
276 particular persons, but no one remembers who got the subsequent cups.
574

GARTH ROGERS

Further evidence that Tongan attitudes to marriage are changing is suggested by the proportion of husbands to wives. The 1956 census asked people if they were married, never married, widowed, or divorced. *De facto* spouses living together were treated as married, "the aim of the census being to record things as they are and not as they should be";⁽¹³⁾ the total number of recorded husbands exceeded the number of wives by 317. The same questions concerning marital status put in 1966 returned a remarkable reversal: there was, despite a steady ratio of males to females, a surplus of 307 wives over husbands: 582 162

These figures may be explained in several ways. The census figures may be in error because of the question being misunderstood or because of the informant concealing his or her *de jure* as against *de facto* marital status from the often strange census enumerator (teachers): this would require some widowed or unmarried mothers to have been included in the 1966 but not in the 1956 returns as "married" persons and/or some widowers or *de facto* husbands to have been included as "married" in the 1956 but not in the 1966 returns. A second possibility is that the number of married men overseas (in Australia, Hawai'i, United States, New Zealand, New Hebrides, United Kingdom) has greatly increased. Lastly, there is a case here for serial monogamy, that is, contraction of second marriages without legally divorcing the first spouse, especially in a country where legal divorce is uncommon⁽¹⁴⁾ because of its expense⁽¹⁵⁾ and the fact that it is not traditional custom. 587 586

As already mentioned it is not possible to quantify unemployment or underemployment in Tonga from the data of the 1966 census; what is apparent, however, is that Tonga is industrialising very slowly--considerably slower than is necessary to absorb projected increases in the size of the work-force. It has been estimated in the Report (p. 30) that over 11,000 young men will pass the age of fourteen during the decade beginning 1966, but only 1,444 men will pass the age of sixty-four over the same period. It is likely, therefore, that apart from deaths and migration, the size of Tonga's male work-force will increase by about 9,700 in ten years. Taking into account the land shortage discussed above, where are these young men going to find employment? 464 [162]

There was no industry of any importance in Tonga before 1940, but the Tonga Government took control of copra production and marketing in 1942 after Lever Brothers made the mistake of selling out on a rock-bottom market. This state enterprise has produced economic independence for Tonga through the policy of gradual industrial development by government agencies without outside financial assistance.⁽¹⁶⁾ Since 1956, there have been state-owned developments in shipping, fishing and manufacturing (desiccated coconut, coir-processing, soap, concrete blocks, 655 [471])

13. TONGA 1958:23.

14. There were only 405 divorces recorded on census day, representing only 1.77% of the 23,317 people who declared themselves married.

15. Legal costs for divorce proceedings may range from twenty to several hundred *pa'anga*, and the cost of maintenance has also recently risen.

16. Tupouniua 1960:405-508.

124 CHURCH AND STATE IN TONGA

684 man had his own wife at Tonga many evils would be avoided and
[797] many sins destroyed'. In order to safeguard marriage Section 8
[671] decreed that a deserted wife might claim her husband's plantations
and property while a woman who deserted her husband should
be brought back to him; if she refused to remain she could not
lawfully remarry during her husband's lifetime.

584 It should be pointed out that marriages in Tonga were fre-
quently arranged, by one's parents or by a chief, without reference
583 to the wishes of the couple who were betrothed. A marriage was
entered simply by the woman cohabiting with a man under his
roof and protection. She was expected to remain with her husband
586 until such time as he might choose to divorce her. Mariner
587 estimated that about two-thirds of the married women in Tonga
[797] had been divorced and married again several times. The mis-
sionaries condemned this custom, not only because they regarded
it as immoral and sinful, but also because it had led to several
murders, when men of lower rank had married the former wives
of superior chiefs.

671 The great emphasis which was placed on the holiness of the
Sabbath and of church services by the missionaries is clearly and
527 unequivocally reflected in Section 2, which exhorts people to
688 abstain from work on the Sabbath day and to attend places
of worship, and which makes it an offence for anyone to disturb
the service or insult the minister of the congregation.

671 Another distinct feature of the Code is the importance given
to industrious habits and the cultivation of the land. Many mis-
461 sionaries complained bitterly because the Tongans appeared to
them incredibly indolent. In a letter to the General Secretary of
797 the mission, the Reverend John Whewell asserted that the Tongans
461 were naturally indolent. 'Only the old and married people', he
wrote, 'profess to work. The young people spend their time up
to manhood in supreme indolence or in what is worse—voyaging
from group to group' (Whewell to Eggleston, 4 Aug. 1856,
WMMSA 1852-79, item 170). A few, on the other hand, argued
that the people were not entirely an idle race. Their aversion to
work was mainly due to the abundance of natural resources from
which their simple wants were supplied. Hence, there was no
strong incentive for them to work, but when it appeared necessary

/67 cont./

593
837
[198] ancient Tongan custom, for Mariner already reports "that no man is understood to be bound to conjugal fidelity," /cited in English/ (191)

191. J. Martin, loc. cit. II. p. 175.

but he adds that most men remain reasonably faithful to their wives and that excesses in extramarital relations on the part of the men are not looked upon with favor. Today in Tonga there is something resembling "successive polygamy" in which the marriage partners dissolve the marriage and enter into one marriage after another. Thus, in April 1952, among the 82 marriages formally adhered to in 'Uiha, there were 12 in which the partners had separated without a regular divorce. In eight cases the husband, in four cases the wife "departed" (acting on their own initiative, usually to relatives in another island of the Archipelago), with no thought of even returning, and soon entered another marriage. This free attitude toward married life is reminiscent of ancient Tongan times when, according to Mariner's calculation, some two-thirds of all women were married, of these half stayed with their husbands, while the rest were married and quickly divorced again, only to be remarried three, four or five times during their lives. (192)

192 J. Martin, loc. cit. II. pp. 167/168.

[562] Since freedom to dissolve the marriage in ancient Tonga was almost entirely the husband's privilege, we must note here a certain change in favor of the wife.

581
178
586
177 However, Tongan marriage seems more stable today than it was in old times, (193)

193. Also compare the figures given above with reference to unmarried individuals in 'Uiha and Fungamisi.

especially since, through the Christianization of Tonga, /68/ it was reinforced to a certain extent by religion, and lawful divorce is no

/68 cont./

581
178
586
177

longer as easy as it formerly was. (194)

194. According to Mariner, a divorce by the husband occurred "with no other ceremony than just telling her that she may go..." /cited in English/ (J. Martin, loc. cit. II. p. 173.)

587
586

Nevertheless, many a nonchalant Tongan thinks nothing of leaving his spouse and establishing himself in another household in the village, in order to enter another marriage without being in a hurry about legal divorce with its attendant costs.

585
162
178

The number of married persons is larger today than it was in pre-European times, if the statements of the generally quite reliable Mariner are correct. (195)

195. Mariner says one-third of the women are unmarried (J. Martin, loc. cit. II. p. 168.)

592
565
178

There is no reason to doubt that in the past the household of the majority of commoners working as farmers consisted of approximately the same number of persons as today. (196)

(589)
(463)

196. The unmarried women lived mainly as servants on the properties of the chiefs (compare J. Martin, loc. cit. II. p. 168), just as male commoners were used as cooks and humble workmen (compare J. Martin, loc. cit. II. p. 92.

(597)

Certain numerical differences could only have come about through the adoption of children, in case this was as common as Gifford assumes. (197)

197. E.W. Gifford, Tongan Society /cited in English/. p. 26; compare with this the numbers given above of today's adopted children.

592
565

The rather impressive household of nobles resulting from polygamy and numerous servants has, however, with few exceptions, been reduced to the general standard (of commoners).